

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

17 NOVEMBER 2015 – 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Brand, Chairman: Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Dalliday, Milham, Pinnock and Stokes.

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs Davis, Miss Ferguson, Hopkin, Mrs Hopkin and Webb.

**In attendance:** District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 20 October 2015 were confirmed and signed.

### 85/15 Open Forum

#### (1) Speeding in Elm

A resident of Elm informed the council of her concerns regarding speeding and inconsiderate parking in Elm, particularly on Gosmoor Lane. She mentioned that she had addressed the Parish Council on these issues approximately twelve months ago.

The resident stated her awareness of the financial difficulties being faced by both the Local Highway Authority and Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the affect that this is having upon their ability to implement measures to attempt to address the situation. She showed the council photographs of the parking issues on Gosmoor Lane and the difficulties experienced when large lorries were trying to pass on that road (a task which would have been impossible unless one of the vehicles had mounted the footpath). The resident mentioned that she had sent letters to Cambridgeshire Constabulary and one particular operator of lorries which uses Gosmoor Lane regularly; she also outlined the response that she had received to a letter which she had written to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the situation.

Members acknowledge that it is necessary for heavy vehicles to transport goods but question whether alternative routes could be used by lorries, as Gosmoor Lane, due to its narrowness, is not suited to use by large commercial vehicles. Members are aware that, as a result of the use of Gosmoor Lane by large commercial vehicles, the footpaths also suffer damage; the cost of repairing these footpaths needs to be borne by the Local Highway Authority, which receives its income from local taxpayers. It is well known that the Local Highway Authority continues to suffer reductions in budgets; it is, therefore, increasingly less able to fund the repair of highways and footpaths.

Members decided that the comments of the resident be noted and that the Clerk would write to the haulage contractor mentioned by the resident and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, setting out the concerns of local residents and the council and requesting the contractor to consider using routes which do not include Gosmoor Lane for the transportation of goods.

(2) **Play area at Elm**

A resident of Elm informed the council that a parishioner who lives opposite the new play area is very supportive of the work undertaken by Elm Parish Council to provide a new play area in Elm (minute 89/15 refers) and suggests that the council may wish to consider installing a small number of benches within the play area, where adults (particularly those who are elderly), who had taken children to play on the equipment, could sit.

Members decided that the comments of the resident be noted.

(3) **Planning application F/YR15/0952/O (Erection of 50 dwellings (max.), involving the demolition of existing buildings (Outline application with some matters committed - Access), at 33 and land north of 17 – 31 Gosmoor Lane, Elm)**

Further to minutes 29/15 and 43/15, members received a further presentation from Mr G Edwards of Swann Edwards Architecture on this planning application.

Mr Edwards reminded members of his presentations to the council at minutes 29/15 and 45/15 and informed them of the work which he had undertaken subsequently to produce an Outline planning application for the development of the site at Gosmoor Lane, Elm. He commented that he had taken into account, in producing the planning application, comments that had made by Elm Parish Council and the results of the public consultation exercise.

Mr Edwards informed the council that the Local Education Authority (LEA), Cambridgeshire County Council, had confirmed that Elm C of E Primary School should be able to accommodate the additional pupils likely to reside at the new development; he added that the LEA had stated that it had been possible to provide a place at this school for all of the children within the catchment area whose parents so wished. He made the point that the level of parking provision on site would accord with the relevant guidelines; also, the Governors of the Elm C of E Primary School would be pleased to accept the applicant's offer to gift to the school an area of adjoining land.

Members remain concerned about the ability of the community infrastructure within Elm to be able to accommodate any further large-scale residential development and are mindful that approval of the proposal would be in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014).

Members decided that the comments of Mr Edwards be noted and that they be taken into account when considering this planning application (minute 91/15 refers).

**86/15 vacancy in the membership of the Parish Council**

The Clerk reported that David Patrick had resigned his membership of Elm Parish Council, with effect from 6 November 2015, and that he had informed Fenland District Council (FDC) of that fact and, as a result, FDC had published formal notice of the vacancy with effect from 10 November 2015.

In accordance with the notice, given under The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986, the opportunity exists, until 27 November 2015, for ten local electors for the parish to call for the vacancy to be filled by way of an election. If no election is called, the Parish Council must fill the vacancy (in the Rings End ward) by co-option.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that, in the event of no election being called to fill the vacancy, the Clerk would advertise (via publication of a notice on the Parish Council's website and

its notice boards) the vacancy, with the aim of filling the vacancy by co-option, using the process utilised by the Parish Council previously, at the council's January 2016 meeting.

### **87/15 Members' Code of Conduct**

The Clerk reminded members of the need for them to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

Members decided the reminder from the Clerk be noted and acted upon.

### **88/15 Elm Football Club**

Members had expected attendance at the meeting of a representative of Elm Football Club, to update the council on the activities of the club etc; however, no such representative was present.

Members, consequently, decided that this item of business be withdrawn from the agenda for the meeting.

### **89/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

#### **(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 74/15 (1))**

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Elm, the Clerk reported that installation of the equipment is nearing completion.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that the application for £100,000 to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund had been submitted and that, subject to compiling certain pieces of documentation in support of the application, the Clerk would be submitting the funding application to WREN for £75,000.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

#### **(2) Parish Council IT provision (minute 82/15)**

The Clerk informed members that, although he had been able to undertake a small amount of research into identifying a suitable machine, he had been unable to find time since the last meeting of the council to purchase a new laptop for use on Elm Parish Council business.

Councillor Pinnock reminded members of the research that he had undertaken prior to the last meeting of the council in relation to a replacement laptop and informed them of further research that he had undertaken in the light of the council's decision at minute 82/15; he made a proposal to council in that regard, that being the purchase of a laptop with the necessary software, at a cost of £644.17 plus VAT. He expressed the opinion, with which other members concurred, that it is essential that the council provides its Clerk with the "tools for the job".

Councillor Pinnock offered to procure, on behalf of Elm Parish Council, a new laptop and associated software.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that Councillor Pinnock be authorised to purchase a new laptop, together with any necessary software, for use on Elm Parish Council business; Councillor Pinnock was provided with a cheque for the purchase of this equipment (see minute 97/15).

## 90/15 Police matters

No member of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team was present at the meeting and, consequently, members received no information relating to recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, in relation to the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, since the last meeting of the council.

Members had no issues to raise, for reference by the Clerk to the local policing team.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

## 91/15 Planning applications

Members considered the following planning applications and decided to submit to the Local Planning Authority the comments set out (in italics) below:

- (1) Erection of a two-storey 5-bed dwelling with attached double garage, involving formation of pedestrian footway and associated highway works, at plot 1, land west of Appletree House, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR15/0922/F (applicant: Mr S Brown).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of a three-storey 5-bed dwelling and detached double garage with store over, involving the formation of a pedestrian footway and associated highway works, at plot 3, land west of Appletree House, Begdale Road, Elm - F/YR15/0927/F (applicant: Mr S Brown).

*That the application be supported.*

- (3) Fell one Cyprus Fir and works to one Pear and one Yew tree within a Conservation Area at The Angel House, Main Road, Elm – F/YR15/0941/TRCA (applicant: Ms Jackie Vickers).

*That the application be supported.*

- (4) Erection of 50 dwellings (max.), involving the demolition of existing buildings (Outline application with some matters committed - Access), at 33 and land north of 17 – 31 Gosmoor Lane, Elm – F/YR15/0952/O (applicant: Mr S Ayers).

*Object to the application for the following reasons:*

- *approval of the proposal would contribute, through cumulative impact of current and planned residential development, to overdevelopment of the village of Elm*
- *the current community infrastructure (including lack of capacity at Elm Primary School, insufficient medical facilities and inadequate local road network) is insufficient to support the continued development within the village*
- *approval of the proposal would be in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014).*

*However, if the proposal were to be revised to include the gift of land to Elm Primary School to be used for the purpose of providing off-street parking facilities for parents to drop-off and collect pupils (with vehicular access to this land being from the proposed development), the council would be more minded to consider the application favourably, especially if the “car parking/drop-off” for parents took parents’*

*parked vehicles away from the surrounding roads, permitted rear access to the school and thereby negated the need for many to use the front school entrance; this would mitigate the risk of speeding motorists and associated problems with children using the crossing.*

- (5) Erection of 4 x two-storey 3-bed dwellings on land south of 6 March Road, Rings End – F/YR15/0976/F (applicant: Mrs Luu).

*That the application be supported.*

- (6) Erection of an agricultural building and 2.0 metres high chain-link fencing on land south of Everglens, Outwell Road, Emneth – F/YR15/0981/F (applicant: Mr J Lawrence).

*That the application be supported.*

- (7) Erection of a two-storey 5-bed dwelling with detached double garage at plot 3, land south of 188 Fridaybridge Road, Elm - F/YR15/0989/RM (applicant: Miss Chloe Hewitt).

*That the application be supported.*

- (8) Erection of a two-storey 5-bed dwelling and detached garage (with store over) and paddock to the rear on plot 2, land north of 89 – 95 The Stitch, Fridaybridge – F/YR15/1000/F (applicant: Mr D Johnson).

*That the application be supported.*

Further to minute 165/14, the Clerk reported the lodging of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the refusal by Fenland District Council (FDC) of planning permission for the erection of 2 x two-storey 2-bed dwellings involving demolition of outbuildings; formation of a new access and parking to serve proposed dwellings and existing dwelling and change of use of land by infilling of dyke to extend cartilage of 76 March Road at One Woodhouse Cottages, 76 March Road, Fridaybridge (application F/YR15/0206/F refers) and informed members of the opportunity, if they so wished, to make further comments (to those submitted to FDC previously) to the Planning Inspectorate.

The Clerk reminded members of the consultation response that it had submitted to Fenland District Council at minute 165/14 in relation to this application.

Members decided that no representation be made to the Planning Inspectorate

### **92/15 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish**

Given the absence from the meeting of the County Councillor who represents the parish of Elm (Gordon Gillick) no report was received by the Parish Council in relation to current County Council issues.

Councillor Tanfield, one of the District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- Fenland District Council (FDC) had received a response rate of around 14% (i.e. in excess of 6,000 people) in relation to its consultation exercise on its Comprehensive Spending Review. Not surprisingly, a number of different opinions had been expressed in relation to where financial savings could be made by FDC. She informed members of the top 6 areas suggested by the respondents to the consultation; one comment was that there should be no public subsidy of the costs of leisure provision. District Councillor Tanfield stated that there would be further public consultation on more detailed options.

- officers of FDC's Sports Development Team would be delivering a number of initiatives aimed at increasing levels of participation in sport.

Councillor Sutton, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- he had been contacted by a resident of Fridaybridge Road, Elm concerning speeding within that part of the village; he suggested that the Parish Council may wish to consider submitting a Local Highway Improvement scheme bid next year (for the 2017/18 financial year), or the issue in general at an earlier date, for speed reduction measures in that area
- he is disappointed with the level of take-up by residents of Fridaybridge of Superfast Broadband
- he is aware that the public are pleased with the new play area provided by the Parish Council in Elm (minute 89/15 (1) refers) and he suggested that the council may wish to consider installing of a small number of picnic benches, to be used by those who had taken children to use the play equipment, within the area of the play equipment.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **93/15 Open spaces (including the cemetery) under the Parish Council's control**

Members considered whether there are any issues relating to the open spaces under the Parish Council's control which required discussion by the Parish Council.

Further to minute 78/15, the Clerk reported the receipt of an additional quotation for trimming works to trees at The Leam, Fridaybridge and to trees and hedgerows at one of the Pocket Parks in Elm; this quotation is higher than the one received by the council previously (at minute 65/15).

Further to minute 79/15, the Clerk read to members the quotation that he had obtained, from the contractor which had manufactured and installed the bollards around the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101, for the manufacture and installation of a "matching set" of bollards around the grassed area on the opposite side of that junction.

Members decided that

- (1) the situation in general be noted;
- (2) the quotation received in respect of the manufacture and installation of a "matching set" of bollards around the grassed area on the opposite side of the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101 be accepted;
- (3) the quotation considered at minute 65/15 in relation to trimming works to trees at The Leam, Fridaybridge and to trees and hedgerows at one of the Pocket Parks in Elm be accepted.

### **94/15 Elm War Memorial**

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he was saddened to see on Remembrance Sunday that a car was parked alongside the Elm War Memorial; also that someone had driven a vehicle across the grassed area which surrounds the memorial.

In response to a suggestion of Councillor Pinnock that there is a need for cleaning of the memorial, the Clerk reminded members that cleaning works had been undertaken, following a tendering exercise with involvement of the council's War Memorials Adviser, by a specialist contractor in 2012 (minute 20/12 refers).

Members decided that the situation be noted and that

- (1) the council would consider, in the Spring of 2016, the need for further cleaning works to the Elm War Memorial;
- (2) the Chairman would seek the views of the villager who cuts the area of grass around the war memorial regarding the possibility of fencing being erected around that area, as a means of preventing vehicles being driven across that area.

### **95/15 Speeding across the parish**

Councillor Pinnock invited members to have a discussion in relation to concerns which had been raised by members of the community regarding speeding in Elm.

To assist members' deliberations, Councillor Pinnock had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, notes in relation to possible actions which could be taken to address the speeding issues and information regarding national guidance applying to speed limits.

Councillor Pinnock expressed the opinion that the council needs to consider what action is necessary to address the current situation of speeding in Elm and he suggested that this could be tackled in two ways:

- (1) establishing a Speed Watch group (Councillor Pinnock feels that, given the level of public concern, it should not be too difficult to recruit volunteers to participate in such activity)
- (2) request the County Council to install a 20 mph variable speed limit in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School – Councillor Pinnock drew members' attention to the national guidance that he had circulated in relation to speed limits, which states that "a permanent 20 mph speed limit or zone should apply in streets that are primarily residential...and where motor vehicle movement is not the primary function". The guidance also states that "it is Government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm in villages".

With regard to (1) above, members received a presentation from Mr P Cole, a Speed Watch Co-ordinator.

Mr Cole explained to the council the manner in which the Speed Watch initiative operates within Cambridgeshire; whereby volunteers from within the community, usually with support from the relevant Parish Council, undertake, using a specific piece of equipment, speed monitoring across the parish. He explained that Speed Watch is aimed at educating motorists to drive their vehicles at speeds not exceeding the speed limit, rather than enforcing (leading to fines and prosecution) speed limits. The educating of motorists is achieved through warning letters being sent by the Constabulary to the "offenders"; the data provided by the Speed Watch groups is used by the Constabulary to identify areas where speed enforcement is required.

Mr Cole stated that a minimum of three volunteers are needed to be able to set up a Speed Watch group; once volunteers had been recruited, Mr Cole would be able to arrange the delivery of training to those persons in the use of the speed monitoring equipment and the processes to be followed in the recording of data etc. He informed the council that it is currently possible for Speed Watch groups to borrow from the Constabulary the necessary speed monitoring equipment (which is able to monitor speed limits of 30 mph or 40 mph) but there are only 50 pieces of equipment for sharing between the 250 groups currently across the County; the cost of purchasing the equipment is approximately £2,600.

Mr Cole responded to members' questions.

Councillor Pinnock offered to seek to recruit volunteers for a Speed Watch group for Elm.

Members decided that the information reported and presented be noted and that

- (1) the offer of Councillor Pinnock to seek to recruit volunteers for a Speed Watch group for Elm be accepted;
- (2) the Clerk would enquire of the Local Highway Authority the possibility of a 20 mph variable speed limit (to cover daily opening and closing times) being implemented in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School.

### **96/15 Local Highway Improvements scheme 2016/17**

Members considered, at the request of the Headteacher, lending support to the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) scheme application submitted to the County Council by the Headteacher of the Elm C of E Primary School.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of this LHI application, which proposes raising the height of the pedestrian crossing outside the school so that it would be level with the height of the footpaths on either side of Main Road; the applicant considers that such a measure would have the effect of creating a traffic calming measure which would reduce the speed of traffic in the immediate vicinity of the school.

Members acknowledge the need for measures to reduce the speed of vehicles in the vicinity of the school but do not consider this particular proposal to be the most appropriate in that regard; they feel that measures are required to reduce the speed of traffic before it reaches the crossing and not upon reaching that point.

Members decided that the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) scheme application submitted to the County Council by the Headteacher of the Elm C of E Primary School be not supported by Elm Parish Council.

### **97/15 Financial matters**

The Clerk reported on the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting, as follows:

#### **Income**

Maxey Grounds	Cottage rent (less fees)	£523.60
J Smith	Allotment rent	£1,750.00
D Bates	Allotment rent	£250.00
A Fitzjohn	Allotment rent	£1,700.00
M J Coates	Cemetery memorial	£148.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£4,371.60</b>

#### **Expenditure**

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £14.88)	£89.28
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £249.14)	£1,494.84
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £149.40 and NI of £9.00), Broadband and other expenses	£654.00
Richard Kierman	Cleaning of notice boards etc	£45.00
Royal British Legion Poppy	Donation	£30.00



Appeal		
R Pinnock	Purchase of new laptop for the council (includes VAT of 126.17)	£773.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£3,086.12</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2015 (in the total sum of £153,648.05), together with the figure as at 31 October 2014.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £4,371.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,086.12 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2015 and the position as at 31 October 2014 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £86,765.00) at 31 October 2015, the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 October 2015 was £66,883.05; making further allowance for a general contingency (at the level of 150% of the 2015/16 Precept, which equates to £51,972.00) reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 October 2015 to approximately £14,911.00.

#### **98/15 Street lighting replacement works – making financial provision**

Further to minute 74/15 (2), members considered the level of increase which would be required to the parish Precept in 2016/17 to meet the cost of the street lighting works within the timescale proposed by Fenland District Council. The council currently has an ear-marked reserve of £31,000 to contribute towards the cost of this work but a further £62,000 approximately would be required to provide the remainder of the necessary funding.

Members decided that the Precept in 2016/17 would need to be increased by a level which would provide £31,000 in that financial year to fund the cost of street light replacements; that would increase the current level of precept (of £34,648) for 2016/17 by 89%.

NOTE: The cost per property in the parish of Elm, to raise, via the Precept, the additional £31,000 required in 2016/17 for street lighting replacement works would be £27.75 per Council Tax band D equivalent property; the cost across all properties within the parish would be:

Council Tax Band	Ratio to Band D	Approximate increase in Precept per property
Band A (Disabled)	5/9	£15.42
Band A	6/9	£18.50
Band B	7/9	£21.58
Band C	8/9	£24.67
Band D	9/9	£27.75
Band E	11/9	£33.92
Band F	13/9	£40.08
Band G	15/9	£46.25
Band H	18/9	£55.50

**99/15 Grants to voluntary and charitable bodies – Fenland Association for Community Transport**

Members considered an application from the Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) for financial assistance towards the cost of operating its Dial-a-Ride North service.

Members decided that, given the high level of financial reserves held by FACT, the application for financial assistance from Elm Parish Council be refused.

**100/15 Correspondence**

The Clerk informed members that there are currently no items of correspondence for reporting to the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

**101/15 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 15 December 2015, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.45 pm**

Signature:.....(Council Chairman).

Date:.....